

*The Sons of Darkneſs holding a Lanthorn  
to the Children of Light.*

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Being the Substance of

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S E R M O N

DELIVERED

In the NEW-MARKET,

IN

B I R M I N G H A M.

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By THOMAS TAYLOR.

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*I will provoke them to anger by a foolish nation.  
Deut. xxxii. 21.*

*Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we  
an incorruptible. I Cor. ix. 2.*

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L E E D S :

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# S E R M O N.

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LUKE xvi. 8.

*And the Lord commended the unjust Steward, because he had done wisely : for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*

OUR SAVIOUR's common method of preaching, was to use pertinent similies and comparisons, called parables ; sometimes he rehearſes certain circumstances, and draws useful improvement from the ſame. So we find him, in this chapter, relating the account of an unjust ſteward, who was accused to his Lord concerning his perfidious practices ; and finding that he muſt be called to an account, and expelled from his office, begun to ſcheme the way of his future life. “ What ſhall I do ;” ſays he, “ dig I cannot ; and as for begging, that I am aſhamed of.” However, being pretty expert in knavery, he adopts a very crafty, tho' a very unjust, method ; and that was to diminish the debts of his Lord's creditors, that he might put the ſurplus into his own pocket. His Lord heard the part he had acted, and was ſo far from blaming him, that he commends him for acting his part ſo ingeniouſly, and contriving ſo dextrous a ſcheme. And our Lord aſſigns a reaſon for it, “ For the children of this world are, in their generation, wiſer than the children of light.” Not that our Lord approved of

his conduct, but takes hold of the circumstance to enforce things of a superior nature ; namely, if the men of this world are so dextrous in contriving schemes of provision for the body, how ought this to stir up and quicken our activity in things of eternal concern. Hence we find fighting, running, wrestling, trading, all made use of to excite and quicken our tardy pace towards the attainment of everlasting blessings. All the professors of those several callings are cunning, active, eagerly bent upon gain, and know it is in vain to expect the end without the means. Hence our Lord tells us that these poor drudges “ are in their generation, wiser than the children of light.” Our Lord may be said to speak this to our shame ; and if the lip of truth had not spoken it, and daily experience proved the same, we should have been ready to have doubted the fact. Let us endeavour, my dear hearers, to improve this subject by considering,

I. Who are the children of this world ?

II. Who are the children of light ?

III. Wherein the former are wiser than the latter ?

I. Who are the children of this world ?

I. This is a character which suits us all by nature.

“ For God looked down from heaven upon the  
 “ children of men, to see if there were any who did  
 “ even understand and seek after God ; but they are  
 “ all gone out of the way, they are altogether be-  
 “ come unprofitable, so that there is none that doeth  
 “ good ; no not one : their throat is an open sepul-  
 “ chre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ;  
 “ the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose  
 “ mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their  
 “ feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and mi-  
 “ sery are in their ways ; and the way of peace they  
 “ know not. There is no fear of God before their  
 “ eyes.” Dreadful description ! but is it true ? is

this



this a general case? It is. The Holy Ghost is very particular. *There is none righteous, no, not one.* See Psalm xiv. and Romans iii. Nay, if we be now the children of light, we were once by nature children of wrath, even as others. "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; for in Adam all died." The fountain became polluted, and consequently all the streams. The root became corrupted, so did all the branches. This is a point that you all ought to be acquainted with; and such as attend the service of the established church, confess the same every time they come there. Too many, I am afraid, know not, neither care, much about the matter. But let me remind you of what you say when upon your knees. "We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone the things we ought to have done; and we have done the things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us." Now all this is sad truth, whether you repeat the words in earnest or in jest. O darkness! darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people who dwell therein. A sense of this compels me to cry aloud in this public manner, if, peradventure, light may break into the heart of some poor benighted souls, so that they may arise and follow Jesus.

2. The children of this world are such as see an excellency in the things of time and sense. One sees great charms in money, and lays out his whole soul to secure the shining idol, and the making a good bargain is to him unspeakably preferable to the treasure hid in the field. The price of stocks, bills of exchange, the mysteries of commerce, are the darling topics which please and delight his poor low-minded soul. Dress and finery are things of great consequence with others. The newest fashion is more enquired after, than the fine linen of the

Saints. To strut about in gaudy attire, and become the dupe of every silly custom, and thus to flutter about like other hurtful and useless animals, seems to them the only end of life, and what their satisfaction centers in. Poor, vain, awful creatures! how vain in life! and is thy breath in thy nostrils? and art thou a creature of a day? where will thy lodging-place be in a little time? Verily in the dust. A sumptuous monument is all that can distinguish betwixt thee and the most common dust. Theirs will rest as well under a grassy hillock, as thine under a marble monument. Nor will corruption, or worms, pay any respect to the pride of costly linen; but will as soon seize thy carcase, as that of the meanest beggar. These bold miners are no respecters of persons. And, after all, where will the poor spirit, the poor soul have its dwelling? Either in Abraham's bosom, or in everlasting burnings.—Honour and pomp are things of the greatest value in the eyes of others, and what their empty souls are always hungering after. All the honour from above is entirely forgotten, for the sake of being thought something amongst a few poor envious worms of the earth. Among the same class may we rank the man of appetite, who only lives to devour, and can speak upon nothing with so good a relish as excellent eating and drinking. How does such a pitiful being degrade himself beneath the degree of the lowest animals! All these we may rank among the gloomy generation of the children of this world.

3. The children of this world, see no form nor comeliness in Christ. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou once slain Lamb of God; *thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips.* The Father speaks from heaven and says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Angels ascribe honour, glory, and power to him. Saints on earth, and Saints in glory, make him the subject of all their praises. Every thing in nature, that is valuable, is collected to shew forth  
what

what he is. The sun, that cheers and warms the earth with his beams; the bright and morning star, the pearl of great price, the bread of life, the fountain of living water, the rose of Sharon, the lilly of the valley, &c. all the relative titles, as king, husband, father, brother, redeemer, friend, and lover; all these, though very significant, yet are but faint images, mere shadows, of what this dear, dear Saviour is to all who trust in him. O, my most dear God and King, how coldly do I mention thee! how flatly do I speak of thee!

“ O for a thousand tongues to sing:

“ My dear Redeemer’s praise;

“ The glories of my God and King,

“ The triumphs of his grace.”

All this is but poor cold rant to a man of the world. His frozen soul remains as inflexible and unmelted as a mountain of ice before the feeble rays of a glow-worm. Christ is very little to him. Tell him of his death, the source of all our happiness, ’tis no more to him than the death of the Grand Signior; tell him of his blood, ’tis no more to him than that of a calf; tell him of his righteousness, ’tis no more to him than a girding of sackcloth; tell him of his great and precious promises, they are as unmeaning cyphers. O thou poor dull soul, what dost thou mean to do in heaven? Would God I could reach thy flinty heart, so that thou mightest see thy need, thy absolute need of this dear Redeemer! “ To you that believe he is precious.” Precious is his name, ’tis above every name. Precious are his promises, his merit, his spirit, his people and ways. In a word, he is your. “ All in All.”

4. But, lest in this public manner I should not be sufficiently understood, let it be well observed, every drunkard, swearer, liar, sabbath breaker, unclean person, extortioner, or thief, is, in the grossest sense, a man of this world. As also is every one who neglects the means of grace, who can lie down at night like a dog in his kennel, or rise like a beast in the morning,

morning, and not bow to his Maker. So is every one who sits down at his table like the ox to his fodder, or the lion to his prey, and never so much as asks the blessing of God upon his bounties. Every one who can drink, or sleep, or pleasure away the Lord's day, to the contempt of God and his blessed service. O, my poor dear fellow-sinners, how dismal is your situation! O that I could speak to you in tears of blood! How dark is your character! How wretched your state!

II. But it is time for me to consider a more pleasing character, and that is by enquiring who are the "children of light."

1. The very stile of them is truly amiable, and what I trust many of you do bear. Now such are brought out of darkness, their native darkness, in which they are born and bred, and in which we all abide till "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts." Then, indeed, we see ourselves in a lost, helpless condition, and are constrained to cry out, "Lord, save, or I perish." Such a one is now as intent upon every means of grace as he was remiss and careless before. A sense of the wrath of God hanging over his head, the vile and filthy condition his poor soul is in, will not suffer him to take any delight in the giddy world, nor can he take any satisfaction in sin. No, the time past is more than sufficient that he has served divers lusts and passions, and he sees it is high time to seek the Lord.

2. A child of light is one who believes in the Lord Jesus, to the saving of his soul. "Him hath God set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. This is the foundation which God has laid in Sion. This is that dear name which is above every name, and in which alone is salvation. Indeed I may say the whole turns upon this hinge, *viz.* our believing or not believing. If it



is asked what shall we do that we may work the works of God? The answer is ready: "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." If it is farther enquired, What shall we do to be saved? The answer is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." By faith we are justified, by faith we are sanctified, by faith we obtain promises, by faith we run our Christian race, by faith we stand stedfast in the ways of the Lord.

3. A child of light is one who "is born again of incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever." This is not a system of opinions, or any outward platform of religion; but the entire renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness. The will is happily subdued, and the will of God takes place. The affections are placed upon the proper object, while the heart becomes the divine habitation. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is now with men, and he will dwell with them;" yea, he will dwell in them. They "put off as concerning the former conversation the old man, with his deeds, and are renewed in the spirit of their mind, yielding their members instruments of righteousness unto true holiness; labouring to keep the faith, in the unity of the spirit, and in the bond of peace." Thus, *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*

4. The children of light are such as are united to God. This our Lord teaches in the beautiful similitude of the vine and branches. As the branch is united to the vine, so are they united to their living head, and are deriving divine sap and nourishment from him, that they may bring forth fruit; and as the branch cannot bring forth fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, no more can these, unless they abide in union with their Saviour. Again, this union is farther illustrated in the figure of the head and members of the body. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone." It is the head, "from which all the body, by joints and bands,

“bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one; so also is Christ.* If, therefore, ye are children of light, ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. Let such, therefore, be your sympathy one with another, “that if one member suffer, let all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, let all the members rejoice with it.”

This union is set forth under the emblem of a building, of which Christ is the foundation. “Ye are God’s building, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone.” “To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” So that all the children of the light can say, “Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son.”

5. Children of light have a sure and certain hope of a better country. “For if in this life alone they had hope in Christ, they would be of all men the most miserable.” But they can now say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; to an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away; which hope is as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, which enters into that within the veil whither the forerunner is gone.” The hopes resulting from any thing in this world, are all like the giving up of the ghost; they will perish and bury their devotees in their ruins, all frail and feeble, just like the spider’s web, which it spins out of its own bowels. Therefore, as the poet sings,

“Lean

“ Lean not on earth, ’twill pierce thee to the heart,  
 “ A broken reed at best, but oft a spear;  
 “ On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.”

But the hope, founded on faith in the blood of Christ, cannot be cut off; *but every man who hath this hope purifies himself, even as God is pure.*

6. The children of light are such as abstain from all known sin. *He that committeth sin is of the devil;* and therefore cannot be of God. “ For this purpose “ the Son of God was manifest in the flesh, that he “ might destroy the works of the devil.” Destroy them! where? In the hearts of the children of men. For, undoubtedly, “ his servants we are to whom “ we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto life.” “ He gave himself for us, that “ he might redeem us from this present evil world.” Yea, from all iniquity, and present us to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, “ by giving “ up ourselves to his service, and by walking before “ him in holiness and righteousness all our days, so “ that at the last we may come to his eternal kingdom.” Did you hear me now? Have you understood what I have been talking about? I have not been describing the princes of this world, but such as are kings and priests to God and the Lamb for ever; such as are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. But there is something which follows not much to their credit, *viz.* That “ the children of this world “ are in their generation wiser than the children of “ light.” And this leads me to the

Third thing proposed. In the main thing, in the one thing needful, they are not; no, in this they are mere fools, but it is in “ their generation,” in the management of worldly matters we have in them an example worthy of imitation. Indeed Solomon sends the sluggard, yea the religious sluggard, to a more contemptible schoolmistress. “ Go to the ant, thou “ sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.” But to the point.

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Lean

“bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one; so also is Christ.* If, therefore, ye are children of light, ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. Let such, therefore, be your sympathy one with another, “that if one member suffer, let all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, let all the members rejoice with it.”

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I. The

1. The children of this world are very expert in finding out new schemes, and inventing what may be either useful or taking with the public. This town is an eminent proof of what I now assert. What a variety of ingenious contrivances has it produced for twenty years past! nay, every year is still producing something which was not seen or known before. Now, what intenseness of thought has been necessary? How much sleep has it lost the projector? How long has he lay awake upon his pillow? Sometimes full of hopes that the fruit of his brain would soon be rewarded with profit or applause. Again, at other times, fear and anxiety have tortured his discontented breast when any of his schemes have failed. Here is a notable example for the children of light. Why are they not as ingenious in finding out the holy art of living to God, and of conquering the grand enemy of God and man? Surely the understanding may be as useful in things divine as in things temporal. Is there not as great a variety in the former as in the latter? Why then are not all the noble powers employed in cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with the deep things of God? St. Paul complained of the Hebrews, that he had many things to speak concerning Christ, which he could not at times speak, because *they were hard to be uttered, seeing, says he, ye are dull of hearing*. But that it might not be the case, he exhorts them to “leave the principles “of the doctrines of Christ, and go on unto perfection.” But too many grow wise in their own conceits, and think they have found out all that is to be found, and that prevents their knowing any thing more. The same Apostle prayed that the Ephesians “might comprehend with all Saints, the length and “breadth, and to know the love of Christ, which “passeth knowledge.”

2. The men of the world are exceeding diligent in executing the schemes which they have found out. No labour is too hard, no dangers too formidable.

Night

Night or day, or both, shall be employed, rather than miss their mark. They rise early, and take rest late, and eat the bread of carefulness. Thus Alexander, at the age of thirty-three, had conquered, as he supposed, the whole world; but what dangers and difficulties did he endure? what sleepless nights? nay, perhaps, sometimes did not even lie down. Julius Cæsar, I think it is said, fought fifty pitched battles; and, for many years, was continually in the peril of his life. What extremities of heat and cold did he endure! what long and tedious marches! what wounds and pains must he have felt! and what anxiety and distress of mind! yea, often, what vexation and tribulation, no one can tell. Now the point these two famous heroes had in view was *honour*; that their names might be immortal among mortals. The same diligence we find in the men of letters; so that they have forgot to eat their bread; nor would they scarce suffer their candle to go out by night. It was said of the famous *Archimedes*, that, when the Romans took the city of *Syracuse*, he was so intent upon the adjusting some geometrical lines, that he knew not that the city was taken, until a soldier came into his apartment and killed him. The very same fervor we see in the man of business. See the merchant, or the capital tradesman, how eager? how smart? nay, he will put his own hands to the business, not afraid of dirting his ruffles or disadjusting the cock of his hat. Indeed you may smile, but it is the truth. How does the farmer bestir himself in seed-time and harvest! Does he sleep in bed when he should be in the field! no such thing. Now it is in vain to expect the end without the means. Here the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. O, how often are we found loitering, if not sleeping on our journey? Hence we find need of such exhortations as these;

“Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee  
 “light. Let us run with patience the race set before  
 “us; looking to Jesus. Fight the good fight of  
 “faith

“ faith, lay hold on eternal life. Let us not sleep  
 “ as do others, but let us watch and be sober. La-  
 “ bour, not for the meat which perisheth but for  
 “ that meat which endureth to everlasting life.  
 “ Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for many, I  
 “ say unto you, will seek to enter in, but shall not  
 “ be able. Be not weary in well doing, and in  
 “ due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.” Indeed the  
 sluggard longeth, but hath nothing ; while the soul  
 of the diligent shall be made fat. Thus, my dear  
 hearers, the kingdom suffers violence, and the vio-  
 lent ones take it by force. Let us labour to enter  
 into his rest, that we fail not through the same ex-  
 ample of unbelief.

3. The children of this world are careful that they  
 be not imposed upon. A tacit proof, by the way,  
 of man’s fallen nature, and the deceitfulness of his  
 heart. This suspiciousness and diffidence we see in  
 all, and all prudent care taken to prevent fraud or  
 deception. Hence oaths, subscriptions, bonds, notes,  
 &c. are all given for that purpose. Nor is that the  
 case only with people of letters ; but even the most  
 illiterate. Look at that honest farmer. He has got  
 as much learning as to read his Almanack, and to  
 observe the aspects of weather ; and when fairs are to  
 be ; there you see him about bargaining for a horse.  
 See how warily he proceeds. He examines the ani-  
 mal on all sides ; his mouth, his eyes, his legs and  
 feet. If there is a blemish he points it out, so that  
 the price may be diminished. See that tradesman, he  
 has just received on order, it comes from one he is  
 not well acquainted with ; he makes very strict en-  
 quiry what his property may be ; not willing to ha-  
 zard his substance into his hands, without a probabi-  
 lity of receiving it in value again. How wary and  
 jealous ? how cautious and circumspect ought we to  
 be, that in no wise we be over-reached by sin or sa-  
 tan ? The grand enemy lies in the way to deceive,  
 and will leave no method untried, which hellish po-  
 licy can devise. “ Be not deceived ; take heed that  
 “ no



"no one deceives himself." Satan is called an *Old Serpent*, in reference to his cunning; we ought not to be ignorant of his wiles. How did he over-reach our first parents by his subtlety? and if he thus set on fire the green tree, what will he not do in the dry? If a man takes a long journey, and has much treasure about him, what care will he take to secure it? he will go arm'd, and, if he can, fall into honest company whom he knows, and is glad of their assistance. And should not this be the case with the children of God? Do they not carry about the pearl of great price; Christ in them the hope of glory? Are they not travelling through a howling wilderness, where the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way? what need is there to be wary! what need to have on the whole armour of God! what need to have all assistance which can possibly be had! Be jealous, be jealous over yourselves with godly jealousy, and labour after a watchful spirit daily. Keep the prize for ever in view, and give the most earnest heed to the things which you have heard, lest at any time you should let them slip.

4. The children of this world are exceeding diligent in correcting their errors. If they perceive that they have taken a false step, how anxious are they in rectifying the same? what vexation seizes their minds? how are they all hurry and toil? all disquiet till they have regained their former station. How will they reproach themselves for their want of foresight or circumspection? How will they upbraid themselves with their negligence or inactivity, and call themselves a thousand fools! Here they are examples to the children of light, and in this respect are often far wiser. Numerous are the errors which they are apt to slip into. How often have they found their hearts deceitful, and by trusting therein have found themselves fools? Too soon are they betrayed into peevishness, slothfulness, or discontent. How often busy in the things of time and sense, when the affections should have been placed upon things above?

What need to make haste ; so that if there has been a missing of the way, they may regain it ? O, my poor dear friends, look upon yourselves as treading on forbidden, yea, upon enchanted ground, while thus wandering out of the way. Never be at rest while any thing doubtful abides in your soul, or any reason to suspect that you are not in your way for eternal life. Cry out,

“ O let my feet ne’er run astray,

“ Nor rove, nor seek, the crooked way.”

Shall the men of the world be so anxious lest they lose a little money, or the favor of some friend, or a little credit or fame ? What need to look to ourselves, that we lose not the things we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

5. The children of this world are ready to take every advantage which may fall in their way. And, indeed, some are not very delicate herein ; they will not spare taking the advantage of their neighbour’s ignorance or necessity, for the purpose of enriching themselves. However, no man of business will let those advantages slip which are looked upon as lawful and honourable ; though sometimes there may be some difficulty in the case. Herein they are truly examples to the children of light. And how many opportunities does a kind providence put into our hands to increase our heavenly treasure ? What is every gospel ordinance, but an opportunity of improving in the divine life ? By the blessing of God, we have plenty of these. We have line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little ; so that it might be a light to our feet and a lantern to our path. If we are watchful we shall, like the industrious bee, suck honey from every flower, and bring it home to the hive. Every ordinance is a feast, a banqueting-house, in which we may sit with great delight, and find his fruit sweet to our taste. Likewise every season of affliction affords us some improvement, seeing “ all things work together for good to such as love God.” The school

is not pleasing, but profitable ; since much patience and resignation to the will of heaven may be learned therein. By means of such instructors, the Lord crucifies his children to the world, and the world unto them. Hence the Apostle says, “ I reckon that “ the afflictions of the present time are not worthy “ to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Before I was afflicted, I went astray ; but now have I kept thy word, said David. And is not prosperity a season of improvement which we ought not to slip ? As adversity is a season to improve patience ; so prosperity should be a time for the improvement of gratitude. To have the necessities of life with some degree of affluence, is matter of great thankfulness, and should make thy soul cry out in sweet confusion, “ What shall I render unto “ the Lord for all his benefits towards me ?” The alternative seasons of the year, the various produce thereof, are all matter of thankfulness, and, if duly improved, may, like so many streams, lead us to the great fountain of all true happiness. The being favoured with particular acquaintance, with the more wise and pious servants of the living God, is matter of thankfulness, and what may be improved to his glory. David’s delight was in the saints upon the earth, and such as excelled in virtue. Many occurrences of divine providence, too numerous to particularize, ought to be attended to, and such as may prove of the greatest utility to the soul, which is fully determined in all things to know nothing, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.

The men of the world endure many hardships, losses, and crosses, in order to the accomplishing their designs, many of which cannot be accomplished without. The farmer must face many a bitter blast, and many a shower of rain, many a sultry day, and many a frosty night, or he might beg in harvest and have nothing. The merchant must endure long voyages, and tedious journeys ; or he could never make his fortune. All your Alexanders and Cæsars

have endured much fatigue, many sleepless nights, or they could never have attained their ends. And must the children of light start back at every little hardship or difficulty which may obstruct the way? No; it is written, "in the world ye shall have tribulation," that, "through much tribulation, we must enter the kingdom of God." Hence we are called upon to "endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." If thou wilt enter into life, deny thyself, take up thy cross. The divine life is compared to fighting, wrestling, running, and labouring for the meat which endureth to life everlasting. All which expressions denote labour and toil, difficulty and danger. Such is the warfare we are called to engage in. But, ah, how many grow faint and weary? Too much like the seed on stony places; for a time they flourish; but when hardships and difficulties occur, they wither away. Fine summer shoots, but easily nipped in the winter. "But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

7. The men of the world do all to obtain a corruptible prize; like Jonah's gourd it perishes in a night. Indeed, what they have obtained with so much labour and toil, falls short of their expectation, and, like the sportsman, all they enjoy is in the chase; if the poor animal escapes them, that is disappointment, and they are dissatisfied; and if they run it down, it puts an end to the diversion. Thus it is with all transitory things. Alexander cries because he has not another world to conquer, and Cæsar disgusted says, "Is this all?" when he was saluted *Imperator*. But now the believer's inheritance is incorruptible; his crown is such as fadeth not away; as his happiness is full and compleat, it is lasting as the days of eternity, coeval with the throne of God. Hence it is called an everlasting kingdom, everlasting life, a kingdom which cannot be shaken, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; a better country, a heavenly one; wherefore God will not be ashamed to be call'd their God,



God, for he has prepared for them a city, where the righteous shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father ; where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ; for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.

I have now dispatched what I chiefly intended ; and I wish I have not trespassed upon your patience ; and yet the serious attention which I see in most of your countenances, gives me to hope you are not weary. Suffer me to add a word of exhortation before I dismiss you. As I have described the children of this world, and the children of light, I hope you have all paid so much attention as to discover your own State. Are you then of the earth earthy ? How highly necessary is it that you awake out of sleep ? See, what a poor portion thou art likely to have ; “ What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ” O then arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest. Awake, thou stupid wretch, cry mightily to God, if so be that God may think upon thee, so that thou perish not. See the heavens rolling away with a great noise ! See the earth on fire ! See the sun torn from the sky, and see the elements melt with fervent heat !

“ See the stars from heaven falling,

“ Hark ! on earth the dreadful cry ;

“ Men on rocks and mountains calling,

“ While the frowning Judge draws nigh.”

Where are thy vain pastimes now ? where is thy carnal mirth ? where is all thy show and empty pride ? 'Tis all gone ; and only the bitter remembrance of its remains to sting thee. Where is thy cursed wealth, for which thou didst destroy thy soul ? how does the very rust thereof rise up to thy eternal shame and confusion. O, that I could stir up thy poor dull soul to arise and trim its lamp, that this last

scene

scene in nature may be welcome to thee. " O that  
 " ye were wise, that ye understood this ; and that ye  
 " would consider your latter end ! " O ye, who are  
 the children of my Father, who is in heaven, who  
 are children of light, see how our Saviour provokes  
 us to jealousy by a foolish people ! Do these poor  
 drudges use so much ingenuity in finding out, so  
 much diligence in executing, so much care that they  
 be not imposed upon, so careful to correct every false  
 step, so ready to take every advantage, endure so  
 many hardships, crosses, and trials, and all to gain a  
 very precarious pittance, which, if they succeed, can  
 but keep it a little while ! What care, what diligence,  
 ought we to use for the one thing needful ! Lord,  
 stir us up ! Lord, awaken our drowsy souls !

" We, for whom God the Son came down,

" And labour'd for our good ;

" How careless to secure that crown

" He purchas'd with his blood."

We know the emptiness of the world ; we know  
 the worth of a Saviour ; we know the price, the in-  
 estimable price laid down for our salvation ; we know  
 the wretched state out of which the Lord hath in  
 mercy called us. Let us not sleep, as do others ;  
 but let us watch and be sober. See the immortal  
 prize set before you ; run that ye may obtain. O,  
 what has the precious, the adorable Jesus done and  
 suffered for us ? Rest not in any particular notions,  
 no systems or platforms of religion. No, gird up the  
 loins of your minds, and lay aside every weight ; so  
 run that ye may obtain. My dear fellow-sinners,  
 one and all, time is gone, but I am not willing to  
 dismiss you till I can prevail with some of you to buy  
 the pearl of great price ; grant me this favour, and  
 then I can gladly conclude. I cannot bear the  
 thoughts of your damnation. Have patience with  
 me a few moments longer ; your souls are at stake ;  
 let us reason together a little. What profit is there  
 in your blood, if you perish ? If you could gain the  
 whole world and lose your soul, what will you gain  
 by

by the bargain? What pleasure is there in damnation? Can the most intolerable pain bring any pleasure to the forever lost sinner? Common sense shrinks at the very thoughts thereof. Is there any honour in lying under the infamy and disgrace of folly and sin for ever? Why thus will ye die? Will you go to hell purely because the greatest numbers are going thitherward? What folly! What! go to hell for the sake of company! How will that very circumstance augment your misery? Why will you die? Is there no pleasure, no joy, no satisfaction in the ways of the Lord? This you have not yet tried; therefore cannot properly judge of the matter. Perhaps the path is not quite so gloomy as you imagine. However, make the trial; and if it does not answer your expectation, you can but at last throw it up. Unto you, therefore, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men. Let me lift up my voice like a trumpet; let me cry aloud and spare not. O ye poor prodigals, feeding upon the husks of worldly vanity, return to your Father's house; behold he waits to receive you; leave, leave your poor swinish delights and come away. O ye poor earth-worms, who, like Esau, are selling your birth-rights to heaven for a morsel here below; come, dig for the hid treasure; the Lord counsels you to buy of him gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich. Take his advice; be at peace with him. O all ye unclean wretches, whose crimes will not bear the light, the sun blushes to behold you; the chaste eyes of angels turn from the abhorrent sight; turn to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Now is the time, the accepted time, to get your shame covered, so that it may not be called in question in the great day of the Lord. O ye poor self-righteous formalists, who are covered with the covering which is not of God's spirit, the time is coming when your poor fig-leaves will wither and drop off; the sparks of your own kindling shall die out; and *this shall ye have at God's hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.* Yet he counsels  
you

you to buy white linen, even the righteousness which is by faith. The wedding garment is prepared for you; O put it on, that when the King comes to view his guests, he may not find you speechless. Throw away your own filthy garments, as rotten rags, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ; and being found in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is by faith, both imputed and implanted, so may you attend the marriage of the Lamb, and sit down with him for ever. O all ye who trust in opinions, who parade yourselves upon your orthodoxy, and, like the papists, stigmatize all for heretics who may happen to differ from you in some circumstantial; who have substituted a notion, in the place of sound conversion; whether your opinion be right or wrong, your heart is not right. No, you have yet bitterness, envy, wrath, worldly-mindedness in you; yes, pride, fretfulness, and discontent. Yet, even to you I call in the name of Jesus; appropriate his merits, and have a saving application to your poor consciences; now arise and wash away your sins; throw off your stiff bigotry; put on charity which is the bond of perfectness; take care of treating sacred things with that levity of spirit, as though they were only trifling amusements. Remember whether those who may happen to differ from you be right or wrong; that sneer, banter, ridicule, hard names, scurrility, are all beneath the majesty of truth; and that sacred things are to be treated with seriousness and solemnity. Besides, while you are unconverted, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. O thou poor self-deluded sinner, while thou art warming thyself in the sparks of thine own imagination, hear, O hear, and tremble at the word of the Lord. *No to them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight. Truly, if ye were blind ye would have no sin; but because ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth.* O, what shall I say? I must deliver my own soul, and I am glad to see your serious attention;  
it



it shews good manners; and let me hope is a mark of your receiving the truth, though delivered in the plainest manner. This satisfaction I would have before we part, that some impressi<sup>o</sup>n is made upon your minds. Truly it is far from being pleasing to expose myself to the sneer and ridicule of every fool, and stand up like a scare-crow; but let me be vile, if I can but persuade you to fly eternal shame and confusion. O, my ever dear Lord and Master, let me find success in this the day of thy power; I want to cast the net on the right side of the ship; I want to find the way to the heart. Lord, I can but draw the bow at a venture, do thou direct the arrow between the joints and the harness; and let the pride and stoutness of man be brought down. So may the Lord alone be exalted in this day. O ye sabbath-breakers, drunkards, swearers, who swarm in our streets, unto you I call; awake, awake, and cry mightily to an offended Majesty. Has God given us six days to make provision for our frail bodies; and is the Lord's Day to be devoted to idleness and sensuality? Why are gospel ordinances appointed, and places of divine worship ordained, if we are not to attend them? Why will ye saunter away this blessed day in visiting, in sleeping, feasting, or at the alehouse? Awake thou godless, christless, graceless wretch; awake and cry mightily to him against whom thou hast sinned, if so be that thou perish not. But the sun is gone down, and the shadows of the evening are drawing a sable veil over the creation. Happy shall I be if any thing said may make a lasting impressi<sup>o</sup>n upon any mind, so that you may arise and flee from the wrath to come. Lord God lay to thy mighty hand, the work is worthy of thee, lay hold on these souls and save them, save them for thy mercy's sake. *Amen.*

## The Breathings of a lively Soul.

### I.

**R**ISE then, my soul, fly up, and run  
Through every heavenly street ;  
And say, There's nought beneath the sun  
That's worthy of thy feet.

### II.

Bright, like the sun, the Saviour sits,  
And spreads eternal noon ;  
No evenings there, or gloomy nights,  
To want the feeble moon.

### III.

O, Jesus ! when shall that dear day,  
That welcome hour arise,  
When I shall fly to meet thee there,  
And dwell above the skies.

### IV.

Had I the pinions of a dove,  
I'd climb the heavenly road ;  
There sits my Saviour dress'd in love,  
And there's my smiling God.

F I N I S.

